

REMARKS

Claims 1-50 are currently pending with no claim being allowed and claims 1, 13, 17-19, 23, 27-29, 38, and 46 being independent claims.

Claims 1, 2, 13, 14, 17-19, 22, 23, and 26-28 have been amended to improve readability and antecedent basis.

The 35 U.S.C. § 112 Rejection

Claims 1, 2, 13, 17, and 18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter applicant regards as the invention. This objection is respectfully traversed.

Specifically with respect to claims 1, 13, 17, and 18, the Office Action states that the limitation of "the entry" lacks antecedent basis. With this paper, these claims and others have been amended to clarify the noted limitation.

Specifically with respect to claim 2, the Office Action states that the twin actions of decrementing and incrementing are contradictory. There are two cases and neither are contradictory. The first case is where the two counters are associated with two different groups. In this case, decrementing one counter and incrementing another counter are clearly not contradictory. The second case is where there is only one counter associated with one group. In this case, the same counter is decremented and incremented but this is to correct the count. The original count reflects too many users as at least one has been abnormally disconnected. The final count more accurately reflects the right number of users. This is not contradictory either.

With this amendment, it is respectfully asserted that the claims satisfy the statutory requirements and are in condition for allowance.

The 35 U.S.C. § 103 Rejection

Claims 1-18 and 29-45 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over *Bui et al.* (US 6,412,007 B1) in view of *Locklear, Jr. et al.* (US 6,252,878 B1). Claims 19-28 and 46-50 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over *Bui et al.* (US 6,412,007 B1) in view of *Locklear, Jr. et al.* (US 6,252,878 B1) and *Wipfel et al.* (US 6,151,688). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Generally, the Office Action states that *Bui* discloses or suggests most of the claim elements and that *Locklear* and *Wipfel* disclose or suggest the rest of the claim elements. However a careful review of the evidence reveals that it fails to support the arguments. The same or similar citations are given throughout the Office Action, so the rejections of claims 17 and 7 will be used as examples with the same or similar rebuttal arguments applying to all of the rejected claims.

Turning first to claim 17, the Office Action make several erroneous citations. First, the Office Action cites *Bui* col. 11, line 50 through col. 12, line 5 as disclosing or suggesting "assigning a unique identification value (UIV)" as claimed. However, the cited passage merely lists "other information that may be contained in the distributed session information". None of this information is assigned. It would be more accurate to say that this information, including "statistical information", is collected rather than assigned. Further, it is uncertain how much of the information is even unique. This citation fails to accurately and fully support the argument.

Second, the Office Action cites *Bui* FIG. 8 as disclosing or suggesting "maintaining a master list" including UIVs. However, these terms are not used in FIG. 8 so the correlation between the figure and the claim is vague at best. Further, the description of FIG. 8 beginning on column 23 fails to indicate that UIVs are included in the disclosed "global session information" of *Bui*. This citation fails to accurately and fully support the argument.

Third, the Office Action cites *Bui* col. 23, lines 50-63 as disclosing or suggesting "responding to a new user's attempt to log in to the data communications network by checking to see if the UIV of the new user is already included in an existing entry in the master list, and if it is, clearing the existing entry from the master list and adding a new entry to the master list, the new entry containing at least the new user's UIV and group identification information" as claimed. However, at best, the citation discloses only a conventional log in request. There is no discussion of UIVs, checking of lists, clearing from lists, or adding to lists. The citation merely contains a vague reference to "determin[ing] whether...authorization may be performed". This citation fails to accurately and fully support the argument.

Fourth, the Office Action cites *Locklear* col. 5, line 59 through col. 6, line 4 as disclosing or suggesting "a method to correct a count for to compensate for abnormal disconnections of users belonging to a group." However, the citation contains merely a conclusion, that is, "[u]pon expiration of a session (...[due to] equipment malfunction) access server 16 removes the entry..." (Col. 6, lines 1-3) There are no details given as to how the equipment malfunction is identified. Further, there is no clear description as to how the two references are combined. The terse nature of the citation is more akin to an objective that *Locklear* seeks to achieve. The means to achieving that objective may be incompatible with the disclosure of *Bui*. This citation fails to accurately and fully support the argument.

Also with respect to claim 17, the Office Action supports the proposed combination of references by stating that "both inventions deal with systems for regulating user sessions." At best this only supports the fact that the two references may be in the same field of endeavor. "The mere fact that references can be combined or modified does not render the resultant combination obvious unless the prior art also suggests the desirability of the combination." (M.P.E.P. § 2143.01) Without proper motivation, the rejection should be withdrawn.

Turning now to claim 7, the Office Action cites *Bui* col. 12, line 60 through col. 13, line 3 as disclosing or suggesting "forming said UIV from a port identification associated with the port and from a NAS identification associated with the NAS" as claimed. However, the citation merely suggests that the authoritative DSC 112 can "determine" the port and NAS identification information. There is no disclosure of using this information to form a UIV as claimed. This citation fails to accurately and fully support the argument.

In view of the above, it is respectfully asserted that the claims are now in condition for allowance.

Request for Allowance

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and an early allowance of this application are earnestly solicited.

If any matters remain which could be resolved in a telephone interview between the Examiner and the undersigned, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned to expedite resolution of any such matters.

Respectfully submitted,
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